TL 5845

To: RENETIL
Fax: --351 1 3977128
From: Mikkie
Fax: --31 30 2721532

24-1-96

Concerning: Improper behaviour by Zacharias

Dear People of RENETIL,

A couple of years ago I started to be active in solidarity with the struggle against the violation of Human Rights in East Timor and pro-independence.
Together with friends I build up a small support-group and we organized several picketlines, actions, demonstrations and manifestations, some of these were joined by East Timorese.

I'm not very much involved on the diplomatic side; I'm more likely to organize streetactions, wich are -to me personaly- more practical and concrete. Therefore I usually offer my practical assistence at conferences, instead of joining the actual internal conversations.

In 1993 I visited an international conference about East Timor, where I offered my assistence in the kitchen. Surely, I was interrested in the conference itself, but my English is not very good and I never got much education, wich made it difficult for me to understand. So, during those days I took care of the tea and coffee and other practical matters.
The last night of the conference was informal so that people could make more personal aquaintance and build up new contacts.

I had only just started to be active for East Timor, so I joined in that night to meet as many people as possible to build up new contacts for my actiongroup. One of the people I talked to was Zacharias and we decided to exchange adresses. We went to his room, to get his adressbook. A third person (whose name I won't mention, because he has got nothing to do with this) joined and took some pictures of us.
As this person left, Zacharias suddenly started to kiss me in a very pushy way. I was shocked and told him not to do that. It took a while to convince him; he did not stop immediately. Also, he did not appologize at all.
Then he invited me to spend the night in his room. He said he would be working while I was sleeping and that he would not bother me. I did not accept his invitation, of course, because he had allready shown me that I could not trust him.

A long time I did not tell anybody about this, as if it was not important. (And that while I regard myself emancipated!)
Still, I feel betrayed and his deed disgusts me.
I offer my solidarity in the struggle, **not my body!** That is what bothers me most: not to be taken seriously just because I'm a girl! Maybe he thought that I'm ignorant, because I'm not educated (I gave up school to be an activist).

Things like this are not very good for one's selfconfidence, especcially because, when your a woman, it happens so often, I can assure you that.

I told this story to an East Timorese friend and he said that I should inform you about what happened. At first I did not want to do this, because I don't want to create a big fuzz and disturb your internal relationships.
On the other hand, I believe that people like Zacharias should learn to respect women. If he claims to fight for human rights, then he must realize that women are humans, too.

I hope you will pay my letter serious attention.

Yours sincerely,

Mikkie

----------FAX END----------